

Earthquake Survival Tips for Citizens

“An earthquake could be described as an ‘assault-with-no-warning’. Because a New Madrid earthquake is unpredictable, it is vital citizens prepare to protect themselves,” said **your name and title here. (Your last name here)** is providing 19 earthquake survival tips for residents of **(Name of town/county)**.

Preparedness Tips

- 1. Buy Earthquake Insurance** before an earthquake. Earthquake Insurance is usually a separate rider on your homeowner’s policy. Your policy should have provisions to help with repairs and living expenses.
- 2. Buy a 20 gallon garbage can and fill it with emergency supplies.** Remember to put in drinking water, canned food, a fire extinguisher, batteries, flashlights, a battery operated radio, seasonal clothing, blankets and basic first-aid supplies.
- 3. Retrofit your home to make it more resistant to earthquake damage.** This includes bolting your home to its foundation, bracing the walls, reinforcing the chimney and strapping the water heater to wall studs. If you’re building a home, you should use earthquake resistant features in the building plans. If you’re buying a pre-owned home, make sure these features are evaluated during the inspection; and, if appropriate, address those features in the sales contract.
- 4. Educate your children about earthquake safety.** Teach your children what to do if an earthquake occurs. Teach your children about the safest places in your home or at school. Take an American Red Cross CPR or First Aid class. See if a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class is being offered by your local emergency management agency. What you learn now might save your life or the lives of family members or neighbors.
- 5. Anchor heavy furniture, shelves, cupboards and appliances to the walls or floor.** Don’t place beds under glass windows or mirrors. Take care not to place heavy objects on high shelves. Consider installing safety latches on your kitchen cabinets.
- 6. Store dangerous chemicals such as flammable liquids and poisons in a secure place** where they can not fall and/or break open.
- 7. Learn how to shut off the gas, electricity and water** into your home.
- 8. Save for post-catastrophic expenses** that aren’t covered by your earthquake insurance policy. These expenses may include higher deductible, repair or replacement claims that exceed your policy limits.

Caught in an Earthquake??

Every year, there are approximately 18 earthquakes worldwide which measure a magnitude 7.0 or larger. Here are some tips if you are caught in an earthquake:

- 9. Duck, Cover and Hold! If you are inside, crawl under a heavy piece of furniture and hold on!** This will protect you from falling debris. Stand in a door frame. A door frame is the strongest architectural feature of interior buildings.
- 10. If you are outside, stay in an open area** away from trees, power lines or

buildings. People can get hurt from falling debris as they enter or exit a building.

11. If you are in your car, STOP driving! Make sure you are away from overpasses, buildings and power lines. Remain inside your car until the shaking stops.

12. Do not use elevators.

After the Shaking Stops

13. Check yourself and others for injuries and provide first aid. National television coverage of earthquakes often shows neighbors helping neighbors while first responders fight fires.

14. Check water, gas and electric lines for damage. If you smell gas, open the windows and doors then leave your home immediately. Shut off the gas into your home **ONLY** if you smell gas. Following the Northridge Earthquake, Californians shut off residential gas lines. Since only utility officials can reconnect the gas, many California residents were without gas for weeks.

15. Do not use matches, candles or any type of flame. Fire and broken gas lines could be deadly.

16. Avoid using the telephone unless a call is essential.

17. Turn to your radio for lifesaving information.

18. Don't go sightseeing. Stay away from damaged areas and out of the way of emergency personnel.

19. Expect aftershocks.